

VZCZCXRO9933  
OO RUEHROV  
DE RUEHJM #0039/01 0051703  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 051703Z JAN 09  
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3701  
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 000039

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND NEA/IPA, PRM FOR PRM/ANE; NSC FOR  
PASCUAL/PRATT; PLEASE PASS TO USAID FOR  
KUNDER/MCCLOUD/BORODIN/NANDY/LAUDATO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/4/2014

TAGS: [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [IS](#) [KWBG](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#)

SUBJECT: GAZA HUMANITARIAN UPDATE: JANUARY 5 - LIMITED FOOD  
AND FUEL SHIPMENTS; GAZA CITY ISOLATED

REF: JERUSALEM 21

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (SBU) Summary: Limited humanitarian shipments and fuel passed into Gaza on January 5. Distribution within Gaza was restricted due to the security situation. Gaza City is increasingly isolated, with movement (including of ambulances) and communication to the south restricted. Gaza City residents have little to no electrical or water supply from the mains. Fuel shortages threaten hospitals as well as the remaining water and sanitation systems. Banks in Gaza remain closed, and the shortage of cash prevents disbursement of salaries and social welfare payments. End Summary.

Some Shipments In,  
But Distribution Limited  
-----

12. (C) Gaza OCHA representative Hamada al-Bayari told EconOff that Kerem Shalom crossing and Nahal Oz fuel transfer station were open on Monday, January 5. WFP contacts reported around 40 truckloads of WFP and UNRWA shipments passed into Gaza via Kerem Shalom that day. However, the shipments, most of which are destined for Gaza City, are being stored temporarily in UN facilities near Rafah. (Note: According to UNRWA, some truckloads did not move through Kerem Shalom January 5 because UNRWA had to negotiate with the IDF "for hours" to move a convoy of supplies to the Rafah warehouse. UNRWA normally expects its convoy to make two or three trips from Kerem Shalom to Rafah in the course of a single day. End Note.)

13. (C) Bayari said that 200,000 liters of power plant fuel; 100,000 liters of diesel for UNRWA, and 47 tons of cooking gas were transferred at Nahal Oz on January 5. Bayari reported that only UNRWA was able to pick up their fuel shipment, as the power plant trucks and cooking gas merchants did not obtain IDF permission to get to the crossing. Bayari said that the highway from Karni/Nahal Oz to Gaza City is controlled by the IDF, and that passage of shipments needs to be coordinated with the IDF. He noted that gun battles were reportedly taking place near Nahal Oz on January 5.

14. (C) Gaza fuel sector executive Mahmoud Khozandar told EconOff on January 5 that his trucks were unable to move to Nahal Oz on January 5, as the IDF is operating between Gaza City and Nahal Oz. He said driving a truck into that area without IDF permission is "suicidal."

Hospitals filled and displaced numbers rise;  
Fuel for generators limited  
-----

15. (C) WHO Gaza director Mahmoud Daher said that WHO and ICRC are trying to coordinate with the IDF the transfer of 17 injured patients in ambulances from Gaza City to Rafah, and from there to Egypt, on January 5. Daher underscored that Gaza City emergency rooms and intensive care units are filled far beyond capacity, and that only those injured in the current battle are receiving medical attention in public hospitals. All other medical services for Gazans are effectively suspended. Gaza City hospital generators are run around the clock and, according to the WHO, have enough fuel to continue operations until January 9. Gaza City's largest hospital, al-Shifa, is burning 4000 liters/day of diesel fuel in its generators, according to Daher. Daher said that roughly 40 percent of all Gaza municipality water pumps are without fuel and not in operation.

16. (SBU) As a result of damage to homes and the fear of further IDF action, there are increasing numbers of displaced persons inside Gaza. UNRWA now estimates that at least 15,000 Gazans have left their homes. UNRWA is currently providing shelter to over 4,000 people in ten different facilities inside Gaza.

South Gaza has more power and  
running water, less food  
-----

17. (SBU) WHO's Daher said that the electricity and running water supply in the south of Gaza is much better than in Gaza City and the rest of the north, as of January 5. Residents of Rafah and Khan Younis have electricity and running water for 6-12 hours/day, whereas Gaza City and Jabaliya residents

JERUSALEM 00000039 002 OF 002

do not have either. However, private sector contacts said on January 5 that supplies of food are more limited in the south of Gaza than in the north. Gaza private sector and UN contacts told EconSpecialist that 90 percent of Gaza bakeries have closed in the last week due to the lack of flour, cooking gas, and electricity. Our contacts said that food in Gaza is now limited to canned goods. They added that most markets have not had supplies of fruits and vegetables since December 29.

Electricity and Telecom Grids  
Largely Broken  
-----

18. (SBU) Gaza power plant chief engineer Rafiq Maliha confirmed on January 5 that Gaza City is without public power. He said that six of the 10 Israeli feeder lines are down and that efforts to fix them have not taken place due to the security situation. He said that several transformers in the Gaza City grid were destroyed in the fighting, resulting in a broken chain of power for the four feeder lines that were still operating. (Note: Obviously distressed, Maliha reported to EconOff that a missile destroyed a neighbor's home last night. He said his family was still in shock and now scared to even look out the window. End Note.)

19. (C) PalTel Technical Director Mustafa Deeb said on January 5 that 160 of PalTel's 200 telecom towers in Gaza are not operating due to the lack of electricity and damage caused by IDF attacks. Deeb said that an Israeli missile strike in Jabaliya on December 27 destroyed a PalTel tower, resulting in the deaths of three employees and the loss of service for 4,000 mobile phone customers. Deeb said that three of the four fiber optic lines that connect Gaza's mobile and land-line networks to the outside world have been disconnected or destroyed in the last 10 days. If the fourth fiber optic line is destroyed, all Gaza mobile and landline systems will cease to work, according to Deeb. He noted that another barrier to open communication in Gaza is the lack of electricity, as little power is available to re-charge mobile phone batteries. Fuel executive Khozandar said that communications between northern and southern Gaza have been

interrupted by the recent violence and that less than half of all calls go through. OCHA's Bayari underscored that Gaza City has been effectively cut off from the rest of Gaza - electricity and telecommunication lines have been severed and water supplies halted due to the lack of power and damage to the network.

#### Banks Closed; Cash Shortage

-----

¶10. (SBU) Palestine Monetary Authority officials report that banks in Gaza are "closed until further notice." In addition to security concerns, the banks are short of cash. Due to the shortage of bank notes, PA employees in Gaza cannot be paid their salaries this week. UNRWA has no cash left in Gaza to procure services or contract for transportation. UNRWA paid only half of its staff salaries in December and has been unable to make social welfare payments to more than 90,000 beneficiaries.

WALLES